



*State of California*

## **OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**MATTHEW L. CATE, INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 24, 2005**

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### **Inspector General Gives N. A. Chaderjian Youth Correctional Facility a Failing Grade**

The Office of the Inspector General — the watchdog for California’s correctional system — reported today that the state’s N. A. Chaderjian Youth Correctional Facility in Stockton, which is designated for some of the state’s most serious juvenile offenders, is failing in its fundamental mission of providing youthful offenders with education, treatment, and counseling services in an environment that is safe for both offenders and staff.

Releasing a 50-page, six-month audit of the facility, Inspector General Matthew Cate called N. A. Chaderjian “a troubled institution,” where teachers at the facility’s high school often fail to show up for class and youth correctional counselors are inadequately trained and are too consumed with security duties to provide much counseling.

The audit found that more than a third of the high school classes scheduled at N. A. Chaderjian are cancelled, mainly because teachers are absent, and that youth correctional counselors spend only about 10 percent of their time in counseling-related activities — falling short of the counseling required by law.

Special education students make up 38 percent of those enrolled at the facility’s high school, yet the audit found they are not receiving all of the special education services they are mandated to receive. The auditors also determined that the institution’s special education providers have inflated the amount of services provided —overstating the amounts in some cases by as much as 33 percentage

points. The audit also found that the institution is endangering some youthful offenders by not consistently monitoring those on psychotropic medications with regular laboratory tests and with timely psychiatric evaluations.

Cate said in addition that the institution is not complying with numerous security requirements and that the facility is plagued with structural and design defects that jeopardize the safety of employees and incarcerated offenders alike. In one living unit, for example, the doors to the youths' rooms pop open unexpectedly when electrical motors overheat. The auditors also found that some of the surveillance cameras and video monitors were not working and that the fences separating the recreation yards of different living units to keep rival gang members apart are inadequate. Partly as a result of the deficiencies, the facility has had a high number of assaults against employees. The institution recorded 12 assaults against facility employees in 2003 and another 23 in 2004.

One reason for the problems at the institution has been lack of leadership. The facility has had nine superintendents or acting superintendents in the last five years and four acting or permanent high school principals since 2002. During the audit period, the principal was working at the institution only half time.

N. A. Chaderjian has a population of about 600 male youthful offenders who are generally older and more serious offenders than those of the state's other juvenile institutions. The average age of the youthful offenders at the facility is 20, with 23 percent falling between ages 21 and 24. Many are serving long sentences for serious crimes such as murder, rape, armed robbery, and assault, and most have been sent to N. A. Chaderjian after failing at other California Youth Authority institutions. By law, all, except those who commit new offenses while in custody, must be released by age 25.

The Inspector General presented 56 specific recommendations to address the deficiencies identified by the audit.

"The findings of this audit are consistent with those of a comprehensive audit issued by the Office of the Inspector General in January, which found the California Youth Authority to be failing in its core mission of providing youths in its care with the education and treatment services they need to avoid future criminality," said Cate.

“The present audit serves to further illustrate what’s wrong with the current California Youth Authority model,” Cate said. “Other states, notably Missouri, Washington, Texas, and Colorado, have shown that with the right approach and the right programs, incarcerated youthful offenders with the same types of violent and criminal histories, can significantly change their behavior. With recidivism rates at 70 percent, the Youth Authority owes it to the public to do a better job. It’s clear that California can and must find more effective ways to rehabilitate young offenders and thereby end the cycle of criminal behavior.

Cate noted that the changes promised by the California Youth Authority on May 16<sup>th</sup> are intended to address many of the problems identified by the audits, but others, such as poorly trained counselors and poorly designed and decrepit facilities, have not been sufficiently addressed. The California Youth Authority has also responded to the audit of the N. A. Chaderjian Youth Correctional Facility with a promise to submit a comprehensive plan by July 22, 2005 to correct all the problems identified.

The full text of the Inspector General’s audit of the N.A. Chaderjian Youth Correctional Facility can be viewed and downloaded from the Office of the Inspector General’s web site at <http://www.oig.ca.gov/>. To view the report on the web site, click on the report title, “Management Review Audit of the N. A. Chaderjian Youth Correctional Facility,” on the home page or on the link entitled “Reports.”

The Office of the Inspector General is an independent state agency responsible for oversight of the California correctional system. The office carries out its mission by auditing and investigating correctional organizations under the Youth and Adult Correctional Agency to uncover criminal conduct, administrative wrongdoing, poor management practices, waste, fraud, and other abuses by staff, supervisors, and management. The management review audit of the N. A. Chaderjian Youth Correctional Facility was conducted under the authority provided to the Inspector General by California Penal Code section 6126.

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